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TWO POEMS

BY AMY LOWELL

I.

LITTLE IVORY FIGURES PULLED WITH STRING

Is it the tinkling of mandolins which disturbs you?
Or the dropping of bitter-orange petals among the coffee-cups?
Or the slow creeping of the moonlight between the olive trees?

*Drop! drop! the rain
Upon the thin plates of my heart.*

String your blood to chord with this music,
Stir your heels upon the cobbles to the rhythm of a dance-tune.

They have slim thighs and arms of silver;
The moon washes away their garments;
They make a pattern of fleeing feet in the branch-shadows,
And the green grapes knotted about them
Burst as they press against one another.

*The rain knocks upon the plates of my heart,
They are crumpled with its beating.*

Would you drink only from your brains, Old Man?
See, the moonlight has reached your knees,
It falls upon your head in an accolade of silver.
Rise up on the music,
Fling against the moon-drifts in a whorl of young light bodies:

Leaping grape-clustres,
Vine-leaves tearing from a grey wall.
You shall run, laughing, in a braid of women,
And weave flowers with the frosty spines of thorns.
Why do you gaze into your glass,
And jar the spoons with your finger-tapping?

*The rain is rigid on the plates of my heart.
The murmur of it is loud—loud.*